114 121 184 much as possible the customary ways of doing things, and though one could not hope for an unchanging or an isolated village, one could find a village relatively so, even if, as was the case with all the villages, they had felt the effects of the deadly campaign for Okinawa.

On one of these trips, I talked with the headman of the village of Hanashiro and then with the officials in the nearby village office of Oushichan, and concluded on the basis of what I saw of the agriculture and the conditions described by these officials, that this small village would be a satisfactory selection. In the beginning, an epidemic of [164] encephalitis made it wise to be away from the village at night and for the first month the investigations were confined to daytime work. This was a serious handicap which I tried to overcome later in the tour by living in the village.

While working in Hanashiro, I had frequent occasion to pass the villages of Minatogawa-ikku and Minatogawa-niku, and I was impressed with the opportunity to study the life of a village in which agriculture [226] did not predominate, and in which the chief emphasis was on fishing and ● [324] stonecutting. I therefore decided to include the fishing village, and took up residence there late in August 1951, making frequent trips on the side to Hanashiro.

As interest and awareness increased, I became convinced that another type of village should be added to the agricultural and fishing selections. [361] It should be one in the northern forested area (the Kunigami region). After discussing this with American and Okinawan forestry officials, I followed their suggestion and lived in the village of Matsuda in Ginoza township. It proved to be a good choice, with the possible reservation that Matsuda is somewhat of a model village whose conditions might be better than the average.

The villages needed to be small enough for one man to study. And they proved to be admirable communities for realizing my original intention of showing similarities and contrasts in an agricultural village, a fishing village, and a village in a forest setting.

121 The results do not constitute a complete ethnography of each of the villages. Such was not my intention, and this could not have been done in the time available. The material has been organized around four central [128] subjects: (1) the nature of the family system and its influence through inheritance on land tenure and land use, (2) ways of life as illustrated in the studies of the agricultural, fishing-stonecutting, and forest communities, (3) daily family life as a concrete expression of the family system, and (4) wider community relationships, including political and cooperative organizations, education, and religion.

The basic theme is that a fruitful approach to the study of modern cultures lies in the borderland area between the social and the natural sciences, and that, in the case of these Okinawan villages, the study [311] would take the form of discovering in what ways the people are using their natural environment and the manner in which the culture has changed and

Since the war, the old narrow one lane roads have been broadened, permitting heavier auto traffic. Land ownership has been undisturbed, for it is not in an area in which the military has required land. Since the war, the villagers have tried to return to their former way of life, but this has been done with poorer houses and fewer possessions.

3

Minatogawa

Minatogawa, the second village studied, formerly was a shoe string type of settlement. Houses, shops, drinking places were along the seawall road. This pattern is now altered as a result of the war. Scattered areas have been relocated and houses built on lands formerly used for sweet potatoes. It is now an indeterminate type of village, retaining some indications of its old settlement pattern along the main road, with additions of clusters of houses in the newly settled areas.

Like Hanashiro, this village is in Oushichan township, and located on Highway 64. It is directly on the main historical road, previously mentioned, which led from Naha to the Chinen peninsula. The road, along which its houses are built, parallels for a distance the estuary of the small Minatogawa river. This narrow estuary, called Usaregawa, which connects the river mouth with the Pacific Ocean, and the small river itself (Yuhigawa) is a boundary between Oushichan and Tamagusuku townships. On either side there are steep cliffs, the sites of the best known stone quarries of Okinawa.

The settlement and the adjoining lands have an area of about 256 acres. It is a mixed economy village with three distinct occupational groups: fishermen, stonecutters, and farmers. There is a second village whose borders blend with those of Minatogawa. These two villages are now known officially as Minatogawa-ikku and Minatogawa-niku. The two terms can be awkwardly translated as Minatogawa first ward, and Minatogawa second ward. But popularly they retain their older names: Minatogawa for the fishing village, and Nagamo for the agricultural second ward. These two separate but adjoining villages were until 1925 a single village.

The division was the result of distinct differences in outlook and occupation between the two sections. Minatogawa is a fishing village and has strong ties with Itoman, a town on the East China Sea shore about 4 1/2 miles away. Nagamo is an agricultural community originally settled from Naha and Shuri. Stone-cutting operations spread over both areas. While the fishing village of Minatogawa was given the emphasis in this study, it will be necessary occasionally to include Nagamo in the discussion.[8]

8 The writer did not realize until he lived here that two villages were involved, thinking that the two wards referred to a single administrative unit. By this time the work on Hanashiro had been well started, and time did not permit the intensive study of Nagamo.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

Part 1

Minatogawa, the Fishing Community

1

Introduction

Fishing families are a closely knit group. They are usually interrelated. For the most part, the main houses of their extended families are in the fishing town of Itoman. Fathers, sons, wives, daughters, grandparents participate in some phase of fishing activity.

In an agricultural community, the first son remains in the home working the fields of his father. In fishing, through long custom, there is an avoidance of teamwork among close relatives. Members of the immediate family will not go out on the same fishing boat. A father will not take his son, an elder brother will not take a younger. Partners and working teams on boats are more distant relatives or friends. If a father and a son are on the same boat and it is lost, the present and the succeeding head both perish. To this incontrovertible possibility, there has been added the belief that if two persons of the same immediate family go to sea together on the same boat, there will be a disaster. And actual and near disasters are frequent enough to make both points of view understandable. The sons of fishermen, who are learning the ways of the fish and of the sea, go on the boats of others. Many younger fishermen regard the belief that it is inviting disaster to have two members of the same immediate family together on the same boat as a superstition (meishin), but to my knowledge, no fisherman ignores the custom.

In Minatogawa, about one half of the fishermen have fields of their own, usually small and poor. Perhaps twenty men in the village may be classed as half farmers and half fishermen, but even in these cases it is the wives and the children who have the continuing responsibility for the fields.

Neither is it rare for a fisherman to be a stonecutter. Perhaps another twenty men are engaged in the summer in fishing, and in stonecutting in the winter, or on unfavorable fishing days. The three main occupations of the village, including Nagamo, are thus found in varying combinations. Fishing is the most exacting and offers few opportunities for amateurs. Stonecutting requires strength and endurance. For those who have land, agriculture offers possibilities of growing one's own food and of avoiding cash outlays.

In an average summer month, there may be about 20 good fishing days. But because of unusual or unexpected rains or typhoons opportunities may be fewer. In 1951, there were only about ten working days in each of the summer months. In winter fishing days average about a week in a

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

512 821 A fishing village has a different kind of regularity than an agricultural village. Activities in both are determined by the weather. During a heavy rain, everyone is in his house. But the farmer, even with a dark angry sky, can work up to the storm, and often continues working in a mild rain. The fishing village is guided both by bad and anticipated bad weather. On a fine fishing day, the village seems deserted with the men gone, and the women in the homes. But several days of rain or unfavorable weather keep the men home, and the village is alive with other activities, such as repairing nets, boats, and houses. Much of the fisherman's work at sea is at night, either in the actual fishing or in going and coming. [513] For this reason, there is considerable daytime sleeping among them. On off days, the young fishermen loll around, often finding it difficult to pass the time away.

9

Conclusion

226 184 Fishing has become the occupation of a few places, such as Itoman town, some villages on the Motobu peninsular, and Minatogawa. Ryukyuans have achieved considerable fame for their skill in fishing in waters other than their own, such as their drive-in net fishing in the East Indies and around Singapore.[3] Possibly it is the fewness of good ports, the necessity of adapting requirements to varying local geographical conditions, such as the coral reefs, or the long period of emigration that have prevented the large scale development of fishing on this island and insured the dominance of an agricultural life.

262 It is also a striking fact that, on this small island where no village is far from the sea, fish is an uncommon article of the diet. The explanation is simple. It is a problem of distribution in which [435] two considerations are involved: the higher prices obtainable in Naha, [251] and the difficulties of preserving fish while distributing them through [439] the rural villages. More often than not, the fish in a farmer's diet is the dried sardine or a canned fish from Japan, not the local catch.

Part 2

The Quarries of Minatogawa-Nagamo

1

Introduction

324 [458] Minatogawa is famous throughout Okinawa for its stone. Stone from the village and its environs may be seen in many towns and villages of the island. Before the war, there was a flourishing boat trade in wood and stone between Minatogawa and the northern region. The fine

3 For a recent statement, see Aquatic resources of the Ryukyu area, as cited, 7-9.

324
516
291

Stonecutting in Minatogawa along the seashore. The long slabs are for building construction. The top left is the estuary of the river leading out to the open sea. The stance of the man in the left center of the picture is usual in cutting the stone. Note the long crow bar type tool for making the cut. The men are barefooted. Most stonecutters are quite young. There is no uniformity in headgear. The stone in the background is dark and streaked and will not be used.

sandstone one sees in the new buildings of Naha often is from the quarries of this area. Stone quarries are scattered in various parts of Okinawa, but the Hinatogawa stone is considered the best.

Sandstone quarrying started, according to older settlers, about sixty years ago. Cutting began on the coast, gradually working up slope over rolling stony land. It is an interesting example of the transformation of a landscape by man. Now with the old methods still in use, the cutting has extended beyond the village. Stonecutting operations in the main are in the steep bluffs around both villages, although there are numerous cuttings in the newer settlements of Hinatogawa and along the seashore. Frequently the cut stone blocks lie near the temporary Hinatogawa tombs which dot the rocky coast. By the simplest methods, large quantities of stone have been and continue to be removed. All work is done by hand; machinery was installed by the Americans after the war, but it is out of working order and stands idle.

Before the war, stonecutting in this vicinity was a more thriving industry than now. Quarries are also found in neighboring Tamagusuku township and there is a distributing outlet in Horikawa, the village across the river. Before the war from 300-500 men are said to have engaged in stonecutting. Now there are about 120 in both villages. Many of these stone workers had come from other parts of Okinawa and the Ryukyus: men from the offshore islands, Ie-shima, the Kerama chain, and Iheya, and on the south east, from Kudaka, Tsuken, and Hesnza islands. Most of these settlers from the offshore islands have left. A few, born on Ie-shima, or from the northern district still remain.

Since the war coastwise shipping of lumber and firewood from the north and stone from the south had declined sharply. Trucks have largely displaced the boats. Transport costs are high and the stone is in demand in closer markets.

2

Acquiring and Working the Land

Customary practices govern the quarrying of stone. These eliminate the need for written agreements. Interested persons know the properties and the possibilities of each site. These customary practices are concerned with the acquisition, the working and the restoration of land. Techniques for working the stone have remained nearly the same for at least sixty years.

The stonecutter purchases rights to the stone, not the land itself. When the stone has been extracted, the land is returned to its owner. This is unimproved land, but after the stone has been quarried, a house may be built on the site. When a stonecutter (sekko) wishes to acquire a certain holding, he calls on the owner of the land. Following oral negotiations, the price is agreed upon. A good price

A cutting line is then drawn over the surface of the stone. The worker straddles the cutting line, lifts the long bar up and down, making the cut along the line to the desired depth. It is slow and tedious work. 316

When the stone has been cut along a length of 6 or 9 feet and to a depth of about 14 inches, small holes along the bottom of the cut are made with a pick. These provide a hold for the wedges. Shavings or pieces of wood are put on either side of the wedges, three of which are used for a 6 foot length. The wedges are then struck seriatim with a sledge hammer and the stone is cracked across the bottom. When cracked, it is pried loose by the long bar, using the wedge as the fulcrum.

The cutting continues all day, or until the desired length and depth is reached for that particular cut. As the top layer is removed, the cutters go down deeper until they reach water, or until the seepage is too great to permit further cutting. Many times they cut 10 or 15 feet below the level of the surrounding land, stopping when the quality of the stone becomes poor. It may be black streaked, cracked, or have large fissures.

The long chisel is a relatively new addition to the tools of stonecutting. About 60 years ago, only the hand axe was used. This made the cut much rougher, compared with the clean cut of the bar chisel. After removal the block is rough on the lower edges. (Fig. 1) With gentle and slow chipping, this rough edge is smoothed off by the hand axe and the stone is ready for use. [413] 324

Three different types of stones are cut: (1) foundation stone (ishiji in Okinawan) used in housebuilding. This is the stone on which the poles supporting the eaves rest. At its base, the stone is about 16 inches square, at the apex about 14 inches, with a height of 9 inches to one foot. (2) Pyramidal stones with a square base (called kenchi both in Japanese and Okinawan). These are made from larger and imperfect cuttings or from odd shaped stones. They are chipped down and finished to the desired size. They are extensively used in breakwaters, and, occasionally in stone fences. When used as a breakwater, the stones are placed with the base toward the water, the apex being shoreward. The interstices may be filled with cement or clay. [333]

The block is the most important cut. It may be any length. When used in building construction, the blocks are generally about 9 feet long, one foot wide, and from 10-12 inches thick. These are called ishibashida (Japanese and Okinawan). In housebuilding stone, the width and the thickness are about the same, from ten inches to one foot on the side. In housebuilding the blocks are laid like bricks, so that joinings are not in the same vertical line. [333] 324

Cutters normally do not use the stone for personal use. More is to be gained by selling. This is done on an individual basis. 432

324 432 [494] [483] [804] [435] The truck or horsecart of the buyer comes to the stonecutting area, the blocks are loaded and taken away. Prior to sale, for convenience, stone may be taken from the cutting area. It is loaded on horse carts, the men carrying the heavy blocks by means of ropes looped around the ends of the stone and over poles which in turn rest on the shoulders. A six foot length (1 ken linear measure), one foot wide and about ten inches thick sells for Y140 (1951-52).

316 [164] [142] Foot injuries are the chief hazards of this occupation. The toes may be accidentally cut by the long chisel, and there is danger of bruising or crushing by accidentally dropping the block, or by rolling when it is being dislodged. Very hard and calloused hands are the mark of the stonecutter; his hands are especially conspicuous for the hard, raised areas on the pals around the base of the fingers, the result of the constant lifting and pounding of the long chisel. There is also danger to the eyes in flying chips but few use glasses or goggles.

[561] Like some phases of fishing, this work is for the young and the physically mature men. After the middle forties or early fifties, a man no longer does the heavy work and confines himself to lighter chores. The very old and the retired may chip and finish the foundation and the pyramidal stones.

492 If a cutter is unable to extract all the stone in a plot whose stone he has bought, there are also customary solutions. When the father dies, his son continues the workings and returns the field to the owner. If a stone worker moves to another village when only half the work has been done, he arranges for a friend, relative, or neighbor to take over the remaining part.

4

Restoring the Land

185 311 [499] Formerly excavations (which might be 10 or 15 feet deep and the size of a large room) were refilled by the buyer of the stone rights. Rocks, pebbles, and miscellaneous trash were used as fill, but following the war there has been a heavy demand for rock and stone for road construction. As a consequence, many excavations are now only partly refilled. After refilling, houses are built on the sites of formerly excavated land. Here and there one can see sweet potatoes or vegetables growing on land which formerly was covered with stone. The original state of the land, its appearance after excavation and its restoration may be seen in Figure 2. Evidences of this reclamation may be seen throughout the stoneworking area.

324 Minatogawa, because it lacks vegetation for protective and decorative purposes, is a good example of the use and adaptation of stone to local needs. There are still stone fences, waist or shoulder height, and many small stone boundary lines, a foot or two and of uneven height. Coral stones, weathered by the sea, honeycombed and pocked, are seen everywhere.